

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00

DODE-00 L-03 SY-05 PRS-01 FBIE-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 PM-04 /070 W

----- 121349

R 130818Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 680

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19713

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO VIENTIANE FROM UDORN
10 JULY 76 REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 5507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, TH, LA

SUBJECT: LAO REFUGEES FLY HELICOPTER TO UDORN AIRBASE

1. ON JULY 7 A LAO SIKORSKY H-34 HELICOPTER WITH THE TAIL
NUMBER 0556 (NOT A HUEY AS ORIGINALLY REPORTED) WAS
COMMANDEERED BY 15 LAO REFUGEES AND FLOWN FROM VIENTIANE
TO UDORN. THE REFUGEES INCLUDED A FORMER VIENTIANE-SIDE
POLICE MAJOR, PHUT MINGSISUPHAN, HIS FAMILY, THE COPTER
PILOT, AND A MECHANIC.

2. UDORN DEPUTY GOVERNOR TOLD CONSOFF THAT PHUT AND THE
PILOT HAD PLANNED THE ESCAPE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. ONLY
THE MECHANIC DID NOT KNOW THE DESTINATION OF THE AIRCRAFT;
ALL OTHERS CAME WITH THE EXPRESS DESIRE TO RESETTLE IN THE
U.S.

3. AS DEBRIEFING BY THAI OFFICIALS AT JSC-4 IN UDORN
CONTINUES, INFORMATION PRESENTLY AVAILABLE AS TO MOTIVES
AND BACKGROUND OF THOSE INVOLVED IS SKETCHY. INDICATIONS
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ARE THAT THE PILOT OF THE HELICOPTER IS THE SAME MAN REGULARLY

ASSIGNED TO THE AIRCRAFT. UDORN DEP. GOV. SAID THAT ALTHOUGH PILOT WAS ORIGINALLY TRAINED BY AMERICANS, HE WAS TRUSTED BY THE PRESENT LAO GOVERNMENT AND WAS SOON TO LEAVE FOR ADDITIONAL FLIGHT TRAINING IN THE U.S.S.R.

4. UDORN POLICE REMEMBER THE PURPORTED LEADER OF THE ESCAPE, PHUT MINGSISUPHAN, AS ONE OF VIENTIANE'S MORE RACALLY POLICE OFFICERS OF DAYS PAST. A CAPTAIN IN THE UDORN POLICE FORCE RECALLED TO CONSULATE POLITICAL ASSISTANT PHUT'S LACK OF COOPERATION IN EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS A CAR THEFT RING IN THE UDORN-VIENTIANE AREA SEVERAL YEARS AGO. IN WHAT SMACKS OF THE POT CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK, HE INFERRED THAT PHUT WAS ON THE TAKE.

5. AS TO THE DISPOSITION OF THE AIRCRAFT, DEP. GOVS; SIAD DECISION IS FOR MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NOT LOCAL OFFICIALS, TO MAKE. OTHER THAI SOURCES INDICATE HELICOPTER WILL REMAIN IN UDORN "WITH MECHANICAL PROBLEMS" FOR THE TIME BEING.

6. AS OF JULY 11 UDORN PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES ARE KEEPING TIGHT LIPPED ABOUT THE INCIDENT. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE HAS REFUSED TO ANSWER QUERIES FROM NEWSMEN, INCLUDING A CALL FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (MOI) OFFICIALS HERE VIEW THE INCIDENT AS AN EMBARRASSMENT. WHILE THE DEP. GOV. DISCOUNTED ANY MOVE TO RETURN THE REFUGEES TO LAOS, HE MADE CLEAR HIS PREFERENCE THAT THEY BE RESETTLED AS FAR FROM NORTHEASTERN THAILAND AS POSSIBLE. HENDRICKSON

UNQUOTE
WHITEHOUSE

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